

NEWS RELEASE



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VIRGINIA WORKERS' MEMORIAL DAY ~April 28, 2015~

RICHMOND, VA – Commissioner C. Ray Davenport announced today that Governor Terry R. McAuliffe has issued a proclamation recognizing April 28, 2015, as Worker Memorial Day in Virginia. The [Virginia Workers' Memorial Day proclamation](#) provides as follows:

Virginia Workers' Memorial Day

WHEREAS, there were thirty-two work-related fatalities in the Commonwealth last year investigated by the Virginia Department of Labor and Industry, which is thirty-two too many; and

WHEREAS, the cost of workplace accidents can be devastating to workers and their families, and may mean financial ruin, placing significant costs on our society and economy; and

WHEREAS, for businesses that suffer a tragic workplace accident, a fatality or serious injury can cause bankruptcy or closure and the loss of jobs due to increased workplace costs such as workers' compensation, health care, property damage, insurance premiums, production downtime, investigation, training, and legal fees; and

WHEREAS, it is the right of every Virginia worker to return home safe and healthy at the end of each day; and

WHEREAS, if we work together, we can make a difference and create a better future for Virginia's talented, driven and highly effective workforce;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Terence R. McAuliffe, do hereby recognize April 28, 2015, as **VIRGINIA WORKERS' MEMORIAL DAY** in our **COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA**, and I call this observance to the attention of all our citizens.

"The Virginia Occupational Safety and Health program has investigated eight fatal accidents so far in 2015, an all too tragic reminder of the importance of providing safe and healthy workplaces for workers in Virginia. I would ask all citizens of the Commonwealth to take the time to honor those workers and their families on April 28th, which is Virginia Workers' Memorial Day."

The cost of workplace accidents is devastating to families and co-workers of victims and places an enormous burden on the viability of those businesses that suffer a tragic workplace accident. The human toll is the loss of loved ones, parents, children, close friends, breadwinners and may mean financial ruin for families.

For businesses, many times a serious injury or fatality is the primary cause of bankruptcy or closure. In addition to the obvious direct costs, workers' compensation and insurance costs, downtime, investigation, training, property damage, and legal fees can be devastating, not to mention the lasting financial costs to the family and overall costs to our society and our economy. A safe and healthy workplace becomes essential in keeping families whole, managing costs and growing as a successful employer.

On April 28, 2015 let us remember and start to make a difference. We can observe Workers' Memorial Day to remember and mourn the fallen, and we can pledge to do more to assure that every Virginian who goes to work each day returns home safe and healthy to their loved ones at the end of their shift. I encourage employers to consider participating in Virginia Workers' Memorial Day by, among other things:

- Conducting a safety and health meeting and encourage discussion on recognizing and correcting hazards in the workplace. Many times there are low or even no cost abatement options available.
- Pledging to work together with front line employees as a team to make the workplace a safer, healthier and happier place to work.
- Establishing and implementing a safety and health program for the site with full employee involvement.
- Encouraging accident prevention and the reporting of hazards and injuries in the workplace. Many times minor injuries go unreported and more severe injuries result later on as a result of an uncorrected hazard in the workplace.
- Increasing attention toward the safety of vulnerable workers such as temporary workers or those who are not fluent in English.

The Virginia Department of Labor and Industry offers [On-Site Consultation Services](#) to help employers better understand and voluntarily comply with the Virginia Occupational Safety and Health (VOSH) standards. Priority is given to high hazard workplaces with 250 or fewer employees and all services are offered to employers at no cost. On-Site Consultation services helps employers identify and correct potential safety and health hazards through walk-through surveys (without citations or penalties), provide abatement advice, provide on-site training, and provide program assistance to develop safety and health programs. The [Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program](#) (SHARP) recognizes worksites that operate exemplary safety and health programs that result in the immediate and long-term prevention of job related injuries and illnesses. Additional information about On-Site Consultation Services and the SHARP program can be obtained by contacting the Virginia Department of Labor and Industry office closest to you at www.doli.virginia.gov or by calling Jennifer Rose, CSP, Consultation Program Manager at (804) 786-8707 or Rose.Jennifer@dol.gov.

The Virginia Department of Labor and Industry also offers another voluntary protection recognition program - the [Virginia Voluntary Protection Program](#) (VPP). The Virginia VPP is designed to recognize and promote exceptional safety and health management programs, generally for larger employers. Additional information about VPP can be obtained by contacting the Virginia Department of Labor and Industry office closest to you at www.doli.virginia.gov or by calling Milford Stern, VPP Program Manager at (540) 562-3580, ext. 123 or Stern.Milford@dol.gov.

The Virginia Occupational Safety and Health (VOSH) program is financed with 50% state funds and 50% federal funds in the form of a grant from the U. S. Department of Labor – OSHA, under §23(g) of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970.

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